



M<sup>r</sup> King as Tom.

CO

SIR

The

Printed

THE  
CONSCIOUS LOVERS:

A C O M E D Y.

WRITTEN BY

SIR RICHARD STEELE.

TAKEN FROM

THE MANAGER'S BOOK

AT THE

Theatre Royal, Covent - Garden.

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L O N D O N :

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COVENT-GARDEN.

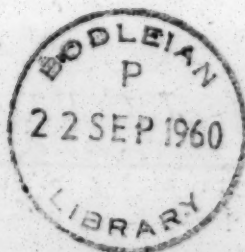
MEN.

Sir John Bevil	—	—	—	Mr. Hull.
Mr. Sealand	—	—	—	Mr. Aickin.
Bevil, jun. in love with Indiana	—	—	—	Mr. Holman.
Myrtle, in love with Lucinda	—	—	—	Mr. Farren.
Cimberton, a coxcomb	—	—	—	Mr. Quick.
Humphrey, an old servant to Sir John	—	—	—	Mr. Thompson.
Tom, servant to Bevil, jun.	—	—	—	Mr. Lewis.
Daniel, a country boy, servant to Indiana	—	—	—	Mr. Blanchard.

WOMEN.

Mrs. Sealand, second wife to Sealand	—	—	—	Mrs. Webb.
Isabella, sister to Sealand	—	—	—	Mrs. Platt.
Indiana, Sealand's daughter by his first wife	—	—	—	Mrs. Esten.
Lucinda, Sealand's daughter by his second wife	—	—	—	Mrs. Mountain.
Phillis, maid to Lucinda	—	—	—	Mrs. Mattocks.

SCENE, LONDON.



## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

ACT I. SCENE I. — *Sir John Bevil's House.*

*Enter Sir John Bevil and Humphrey.*

*Sir J. B.* **H**AVE you order'd that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

*Hum.* Yes, sir; I believ'd you had something of moment to say to me.

*Sir J. B.* I'll tell thee, then. In the first place, this wedding of my son's in all probability (shut the door) will never be at all.

*Hum.* How, sir, not be at all! for what reason is it carried on in appearance?

*Sir J. B.* Honest Humphrey have patience, and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself in some part of my life lived indeed with freedom, but I hope without reproach: now I thought liberty would be as litt'e injurious to my son, therefore as soon as he grew towards man, I indulged him in living after his own manner. I know not how otherwise to judge of his inclination; for what can be concluded from a behaviour under restraint and fear? but what charms me above all expression is, that my son has never in the least action, the most distant hint or word, valued himself upon that great estate of his mother's, which, according to our marriage settlement, he has had ever since he came to age.

*Hum.* No, sir; on the contrary, he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it before you or any belonging to you. He is as dependent and resign'd to your will as if he had not a farthing but what must come from your immediate bounty—You have ever acted like a good and generous father, and he like an obedient and grateful son.

*Sir J. B.* To be short, Humphrey, his reputation was so fair in the world, that old Sealand, the great India merchant, has offer'd his only daughter, and sole heiress to that vast estate of his, as a wife for him. You may be sure I made no difficulties; the match was agreed on, and this very day named for the wedding.

*Hum.* What hinders the proceeding?

*Sir J. B.* Don't interrupt me. You know I was, last Thursday, at the masquerade; my son, you may remember, soon found us out—he knew his grandfather's habit, which I then wore; and though it was in the mode of the last age, yet the maskers, you know, follow'd us as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

*Hum.* I remember, indeed, a young man of quality in the habit of a clown that was particularly troublesome.

*Sir J. B.* Right—he was too much what he seem'd to be.—You remember how impudently he follow'd and teased us, and wou'd know who we were.



*Hum.* I know he has a mind to come into that particular. [*Asi. e.*]

*Sir J. B.* Ay, he follow'd us till the gentleman who led the lady in the Indian mantle presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the fable) grow polite, by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me. The clown was not reform'd, but rudely persisted, and offered to force off my mask; with that the gentleman throwing off his own, appeared to be my son, and in his concern for me tore off that of the nobleman: at this they seized each other, the company called the guards, and in the surprize the lady swoon'd away; upon which my son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the lady—when raising her in his arms, "Art thou gone," cry'd he. "for ever—forbid it Heav'n!—She revives at his known voice—and with the most familiar, though modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulders weeping, but wept as in the arms of one before whom she could give herself a loose, were she not under observation; while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

*Hum.* I have observed this accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

*Sir J. B.* Her uncommon air, her noble modesty, the dignity of her person, and the occasion itself, drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzz'd about she was the adopted daughter of a famous sea-officer who had serv'd in France. Now this unexpected and public discovery of my son's so deep concern for her—

*Hum.* Was what, I suppose, alarm'd Mr. Sealard, in behalf, of his daughter, to break off the match.

*Sir J. B.* You are right—he came to me yesterday, and said he thought himself disengaged from the bargain, being credibly inform'd my son was already marry'd, or worse, to the lady at the masquerade. I palliated matters, and insist'd on our agreement; but we parted with little less than a direct breach between us.

*Hum.* Well, sir, and what notice have you taken of all this to my young master?

*Sir J. B.* That's what I wanted to debate with you—I have said nothing to him yet—But look ye, Humphrey, if there is so much in this amour of his that he denies upon my summons to marry, I have cause enough to be offended? and then, by my insisting upon his marrying to-day, I shall know how far he is engag'd to this lady in masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my measures; in the mean time, I would have you find out how far that rogue his man is let into his secret—he, I know, will play tricks as much to cross me as to serve his master.

*Hum.* Why do you think so of him, sir? I believe he is no worse than I was for you at your son's age.

*Sir J. B.* I see it in the rascal's looks. But I have dwelt on these things too long: I'll go to my son immediately, and while

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I'm gone, your part is to convince his rogue, Tom, that I am in earnest. I'll leave him to you. [Exit]

*Hum.* Well, tho' this father and son live as well together as possible, yet their fear of giving each other pain is attended with constant mutual uneasiness. I am sure I have enough to do to be honest, and yet keep well with them both; but they know I love 'em, and that makes the task less painful however.—Oh, here's the prince of poor coxcombs, the representative of all the better fed than taught!—Ho, ho, Tom! whither so gay and so airy this morning?

*Enter TOM singing.*

*Tom.* Sir, we servants of single-gentlemen are another kind of people than you domestic ordinary drudges that do business; we are rais'd above you: the pleasures of board-wages, tavern-dinners, and many a clear gain, vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of.

*Hum.* Thou hast follies and vices enough for a man of ten thousand a-year, tho' it is but as to other day that I sent for you to town to put you into Mr. Sealand's family, that you might learn a little before I put you to my young master, who is too gentle for training such a rude thing as you were into proper obedience.—You then pull'd off your hat to every one you met in the street, like a bashful, great, awkward cub as you were. But your great oaken cudgel, when you were a booby, became you much better than that dangling stick at your button, now you are a fop, that's fit for nothing except it hangs there to be ready for your master's hand when you are impertinent.

*Tom.* Uncle Humphrey, you know my master scorns to strike his servants; you talk as if the world was now just as it was when my old master and you were in your youth—when you went to dinner because it was so much a clock, when the great blow was given in the hall at the pantry door, and all the family came out of their holes in such strange dresses and formal faces as you see in the pictures in our long gallery in the country.

*Hum.* Why, you wild rogue!

*Tom.* You cou'd not fall to your dinner till a formal fellow in a black gown said something over the meat, as if the cook had not made it ready enough.

*Hum.* Sirrah, who do you prate after?—despising men of sacred characters! I hope you never heard my young master talk so like a profligate.

*Tom.* Sir, I saw you put upon me when I first came to town about being orderly, and the doctrine of wearing shams to make linen last clean a fortnight, keeping my cloaths fresh, and wearing a frock within doors.

*Hum.* Sirrah, I gave you those lessons because I suppos'd at that time your master and you might have din'd at home every day, and cost you nothing; then you might have made a good family servant; but the gang you have frequented since at cho-

colate-houses and taverns, in a continual round of noise and extravagance—

*Tom.* I don't know what you heavy inmates call noise and extravagance; but we gentlemen who are well fed, and cut a figure, sir, think it a fine life, and that we must be very pretty fellows who are kept only to be looked at.

*Hum.* Very well, sir—I hope the fashion of being lewd and extravagant, despising of decency and order, is almost at an end, since it is arrived at persons of your quality.

*Tom.* Master Humphrey, ha ha! you were an unhappy lad to be sent up to town in such queer days as you were. Why now, sir, the lacquies are the men of pleasure of the age; the top gamesters, and many a lac'd coat about town, have had their education in our party colour'd regiment.—We are false lovers, have a taste of music, poetry, bi let doux, drefs, politics, ruin damsels; and when we are weary of this lewd town, and have a mind to take up, whip into our masters wigs and linen, and marry fortunes.

*Hum.* Hey day!

*Tom.* Nay, sir, our order is carried up to the highest dignities and distinctions: step but into the Painted Chamber—and by our titles you'd take us all for men of quality; then again; come down to the Court of Requests, and you shall see us all laying our broken heads together, for the good of the nation; and then we never carry a question *nemine contradicente*, yet this I can say with a safe conscience, (and I wish every gentleman of our cloth could lay his hand upon his heart and say the same) that I never took so much as a single mug of beer for my vote in all my life.

*Hum.* Sirrah, there is no enduring your extravagance; I'll hear you prate no longer: I wanted to see you to inquire how things go with your master, as far as you understand them: I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day?

*Tom.* Ay, sir, he knows it, and is dress'd as gay as the sun; but, between you and I, my dear! he has a very heavy heart under all that gaiety. As soon as he was dress'd I retir'd, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walk'd thoughtfully to and fro in the room, then went into his closet; when he came out he gave me this for his mistress, whose maid you know—

*Hum.* Is passionately fond of your fine person.

*Tom.* The poor fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the world, and the plays, operas, and ridottes for the winter, the Parks and Bellize for our summer diversions; and lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a world of humour.

*Hum.* Coxcomb! Well, but why don't you run with your master's letter to Mrs. Lucinda, as he order'd you?

*Tom.* Because Mrs. Lucinda is not so easily come at as you think for.

*Hum.* Not easily come at? why, sir, are not her father and my



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old master agreed that she and Mr. Bevil are to be one flesh before to-morrow morning?

*Tom.* It's no matter for that; her mother, it seems, Mrs. Sealand, has not agreed to it; and you must know, Mr. Humphrey, that in that family the grey mare is the better horse.

*Hum.* What dost thou mean?

*Tom.* In one word, Mrs. Sealand pretends to have a will of her own, and has provided a relation of hers, a stiff starb'd philosopher, and a wise fool, for her daughter; for which reason, for these ten days past, she has suffer'd no message nor letter from my master to come near her.

*Hum.* And where had you this intelligence?

*Tom.* From a foolish fond soul that can keep nothing from me; one that will deliver this letter too if she's rightly manag'd.

*Hum.* What, her pretty handmaid, Mrs. Phillis?

*Tom.* Even she, sir. This is the very hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a pretence of a visit to our house-keeper forsooth, but in reality to have a glance at——

*Hum.* Your sweet face, I warrant you.

*Tom.* Nothing else in nature. You must know I love to fret and play with the little wanton——

*Hum.* Play with the little wanton!—What will this world come to!

*Tom.* I met her this morning in a new manteau and petticoat not a bit the worse for her lady's wearing, and she has always new thoughts and new airs with new clothes—then she never fails to steal some glance or gesture from every visitant at their house, and is indeed the whole town of coquettes at second-hand. But here she comes; in one motion she speaks and describes herself better than all the words in the world can.

*Hum.* Then I hope, dear sir, when your own affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your master's with her.

*Tom.* Dear Humphrey, you know my master is my friend; and those are people I never forget——

*Hum.* Sauciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [Exit.

*Enter Phillis.*

*Phil.* Oh, Mr. Thomas, is Mrs. Sugarkey at home?—Lard! one is almost ashamed to pass along the streets. The town is quite empty, and nobody of fashion left in it; and the ordinary people do so stare to see any thing dress'd like a woman of condition pass by. Alas! alas! it is a sad thing to walk. O fortune, fortune!

*Tom.* What! a sad thing to walk! why, madam Phillis, do you wish yourself lame?

*Phil.* No, Mr. Thomas, but I wish I were generally carry'd in a coach or chair, and of a fortune neither to stand nor go, but to totter, or slide, to be short-sighted or stare, to peer in the face, to look distant, to observe, to overlook, yet all become me; and if I were rich, I could twine and loll as well as the best of them. Oh Tom, Tom! is it not a pity that you should be



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so great a coxcomb, and I so great a coquette, and yet be such poor devils as we are?

*Tom.* Mrs. Phillis, I am your humble servant for that—

*Phil.* Yes, Mr. Thomas, I know how much you are my humble servant, and know what you said to Mrs. Judy upon seeing her in one of her lady's cast manteaus, that any one would have thought her the lady, and that she had ordered the other to wear it till it sat easy—for now only it was becoming—to my lady it was only a covering, to Mrs. Judy it was a habit. This you said after somebody or other. Oh Tom, Tom! thou art as false and as base as the best gentleman of them all! but, you wretch, talk to me no more on the old odious subject: don't I say.

*Tom.* I know not how to resist your commands, madam.

[*In a submissive tone, retiring.*]

*Phil.* Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

*Tom.* Oh, I have her! I have nettled and put her into the right temper to be wrought upon and set a prating. (*Aside.*)—Why truly, to be plain with you, Mrs. Phillis, I can take little comfort of late in frequenting your house.

*Phil.* Pray, Mr. Thomas, what is it, all of a sudden, offends your nicety at our house?

*Tom.* I don't care to speak particulars, but I dislike the whole.

*Phil.* I thank you, sir; I am a part of that whole.

*Tom.* Mistake me not, good Phillis.

*Phil.* Good Phillis! saucy enough. But however—

*Tom.* I say it is that thou art a part which gives me pain for the disposition of the whole. You must know, madam, to be serious, I am a man at the bottom of prodigious nice honour. You are too much expos'd to company at your house. To be plain, I don't like so many that would be your mistress's lovers whispering to you.

*Phil.* Don't think to put that upon me. You say this because I wrung you to the heart when I touched your guilty conscience about Judy.

*Tom.* Ah, Phillis, Phillis! if you but knew my heart!

*Phil.* I know too much on't.

*Tom.* Don't disparage your charms, good Phillis, with jealousy of so worthless an object; besides, she is a poor hussy; and if you doubt the sincerity of my love, you will allow me true to my interest. You are a fortune, Phillis—

*Phil.* What would the s-p be at now? In good time, indeed, you shall be setting up for a fortune.

*Tom.* Dear Mrs. Phillis! you have such a spirit that we shall never be dull in marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a fortune, and you have an estate in my hands.

[*He pulls out a purse, she eyes it.*]

*Phil.* What pretence have I to what is in your hands, Mr. Thomas?

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*Tom.* As thus: there are hours, you know, when a lady is neither pleased nor displeased, neither sick nor well, when she lolls or loiters, when she is without desires, from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

*Phil.* Well, what then?

*Tom.* When she has not life enough to keep her bright eyes quite open to look at her own dear image in the glass.

*Phil.* Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own prating.

*Tom.* There are also prosperous and good natur'd moments as when a knot or a patch is happily fix'd. when the complexion particularly flourishes.

*Phil.* Well, what then? I have not patience!

*Tom.* Why then—or on the like occasions—we servants, who have skill to know how to time business, see, when such a pretty folded thing as this is (*Shows a letter.*) may be presented, laid, or dropped, as best suits the present humour. And, madam, because it is a long wearisome journey to run through all the several stages of a lady's temper, my master, who is the most reasonable man in the world, presents you this to bear your charges on the road. [*Gives her the purse.*]

*Phil.* Now, you think me a corrupt huffy.

*Tom.* O fy! I only think you'll take the letter.

*Phil.* Nay, I know you do; but I know my own innocence: I take it for my mistress's sake.

*Tom.* I know it. my pretty one! I know it.

*Phil.* Yes, I say I do it because I would not have my mistress deluded by one who gives no proof of his passion: but I'll talk more of this as you see me on my way home.—No,; Tom I assure thee I take this trash of thy master's not for the value of the thing, but as it convinces me he has a true respect for my mistress. I remember a verse to the purpose:—

They may be false who languish and complain,

But they who part with money never feign.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—Bevil, *Junior's*, Lodgings.

Bevil, *Junior*, reading.

*B. Jun.* These moral writers practise virtue after death. This charming vision of Mirza! such an author consulted in a morning sets the spirits for the vicissitudes of the day better than the gials does a man's person. But what a day have I to go through! to put on an easy look with an aching heart!—If this lady, my father urges me to marry, shou'd not refuse me, my dilemma is insupportable. But why should I fear it? Is not she in equal distress with me? Has not the letter I sent her this morning confessed my inclination to another? Nay, have I not moral assurances of her engagements too my friend Myrtle? It's impossible but she must give in to it; for sure to be deny'd is a favour any man may pretend to. It must be so—Well, then with the assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my father I am ready to marry her—then let me resolve upon (what I am not very good at) an honest dissimulation.

*Enter Tom.*

*Tom.* Sir John Bevil, sir, is in the next room.

*B. jun.* Dunce! why did you not bring him in?

*Tom.* I told him, sir, you were in your closet.

*B. jun.* I thought you had known, sir, it was my duty to see my father any where. *(Going himself to the door.)*

*Tom.* The devil's in my master! he has always more wit than I have. *(Aside.)*

*Bevil, junior, introducing Sir John.*

*B. jun.* Sir, you are the most gallant, the most complaisant, of all parents—Sure 'tis not a compliment to say these lodgings are yours—Why would you not walk in, sir?

*Sir J. B.* I was loath to interrupt you unseasonably on your wedding-day.

*B. jun.* One to whom I am beholden for my birth-day might have used less ceremony.

*Sir J. B.* Well, son, I have intelligence you have writ to your mistress this morning. It would please my curiosity to know the contents of a wedding-day letter, for courtship must then be over.

*B. jun.* I assure you, sir, there was no insolence in it upon the prospect of such a vast fortune being added to our family, but much acknowledgment of the lady's great desert.

*Sir J. B.* But, dear Jack, are you in earnest in all this? and will you really marry her?

*B. jun.* Did I ever disobey any command of yours, sir? nay, any inclination that I saw you bent upon? If the lady is dress'd and ready, you see I am. I suppose the lawyers are ready too.

*Enter Humphrey.*

*Hum.* Sir, Mr. Sealand is at the coffee-house, and has sent to speak with you.

*Sir J. B.* Oh! that's well! then I warrant the lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the way you say—

*B. jun.* If you please, sir, I'll take a chair and go to Mr. Sealand's, where the young lady and I will wait your leisure.

*Sir J. B.* By no means—the old fellow will be so vain if he sees—

*B. jun.* Ay—but the young lady, sir, will think me so in different—

*Hum.* Ay, there you are right; press your readiness to go to the bride, he won't let you. *(Aside to Bev. jun.)*

*B. jun.* Are you sure of that?

*(Aside to Hum.)*

*Hum.* How he likes being prevented!

*(Aside.)*

*Sir J. B.* No, no; you are an hour or two too early. *(Looking on his watch.)* Besides, this Sealand is a moody old fellow.—There's no dealing with some people but by managing with indifference. We must leave to him the conduct of this day, it is the last of his commanding his daughter.

*B. jun.* Sir, he can't take it ill that I am impatient to be hers.

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*Sir J. B.* Well, son, I'll go myself and take orders in your affair—you'll be in the way, I suppose, if I send to you—I'll leave your old friend with you. Humphrey, don't let him stir, d'ye hear. Your servant, your servant (*Exit Sir John.*)

*Hum.* I have a sad time on't, sir, between you and my master. I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent inclinations for the match. I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common good. Heav'n grant a good end of this matter: but there is a lady, sir, that gives your father much trouble and sorrow—You'll pardon me.

*B. jun.* Humphrey, I know thou art a friend to both, and in that confidence I dare tell thee: that lady, is a woman of honour and virtue. You may assure yourself, I never will marry without my father's consent; but give me leave to say too, this declaration does not come up to a promise that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

*Hum.* My dear master! were I but worthy to know this secret that so near concerns you, my life, my all, should be engaged to serve you. This, sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will and can be secret: your trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain and tell you so.

*B. jun.* That's all I ask. Thou hast made it now my interest to trust thee.—Be patient then, and hear the story of my heart.

*Hum.* I am all attention, sir.

*B. jun.* You may remember, Humphrey, that in my last travels my father grew uneasy at my making so long a stay at Toulon.

*Hum.* I remember it; he was apprehensive some woman had laid hold of you.

*B. jun.* His fears were just, for there I first saw this lady: she is of English birth: her father's name was Danvers, a younger brother of an ancient family and originally an eminent merchant of Bristol, who, upon repeated misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the Indies. In this retreat, Providence again grew favourable to his industry, and in six years time restored him to his former fortunes. On this he sent directions over that his wife and little family should follow him to the Indies. His wife, impatient to obey such welcome orders, would not wait the leisure of a convey, but took the first occasion of a single ship, and with her husband's sister only and this daughter, then scarce seven years old, undertook the fatal voyage: for here, poor creature, she lost her liberty and life: she and her family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a privateer from Toulon. Being thus made a prisoner, though, as such, not ill-treated, yet the fright, the shock, and the cruel disappointment, seized with such violence upon her unhealthy frame, she sickened, pined, and died at sea.

*Hum.* Poor soul! Oh, the helpless infant

*B. jun.* Her sister yet survived, and had the care of her; the captain, too, proved to have humanity, and became a father to her; for having himself married an English woman, and being



childless, he brought home into Toulon this her little country-woman, this orphan I may call her, presenting her, with all her dead mother's moveables of value, to his wife, to be educated as his own adopted daughter.

*Hum.* Fortune here seem'd again to smile on her.

*B. jun.* Only to make her frowns more terrible; for in his height of fortune this captain too, her benefactor, was unfortunately killed at sea, and dying intestate, his estate fell wholly to an advocate, his brother, who coming soon to take possession, there found, among his other riches, this blooming virgin at his mercy.

*Hum.* He durst not sure abuse his power!

*B. jun.* No wonder if his pamper'd blood was fix'd at the sight of her.—In short, he lov'd; but when all arts and gentle means had fail'd to move, he offer'd to his menaces in vain, denouncing vengeance on her cruelty, demanding her to account for all her maintenance from her childhood, seiz'd on her little fortune as his own inheritance, and was dragging her by violence to prison, when Providence at the instant interpos'd, and sent me by miracle to relieve her.

*Hum.* 'Twas Providence, indeed! But pray, sir, after all this trouble, how came this lady at last to England?

*B. jun.* The disappointed advocate, finding she had so unexpected a support, on cooler thoughts descended to a composition, which I, without her knowledge secretly discharged.

*Hum.* That generous concealment made the obligation double.

*B. jun.* Having thus obtained her liberty, I prevail'd, not without some difficulty, to see her safe to England, where we no sooner arriv'd, but my father, jealous of my being imprudently engag'd, immediately propos'd this fatal match that hangs upon my quiet.

*Hum.* I find, sir, you are irrecoverably fix'd upon this lady.

*B. jun.* As my vital life dwells in my heart—and yet you see what I do to please my father; walk in this pageantry of dress, this splendid covering of sorrow. But, Humphrey, you have your lesson.

*Hum.* Now, sir, I have but one material question—

*B. jun.* Ask it freely.

*Hum.* Is it then your own passion for this secret lady, or hers for you, that gives you this aversion to the match your father has propos'd you?

*B. jun.* I shall appear, Humphrey, more romantic in my answer than in all the rest of my story; for though I dote on her to death, and have no little reason to believe she has the same thoughts for me, yet in all my acquaintance and utmost privacies with her, I never once directly told her that I lov'd.

*Hum.* How was it possible to avoid it?

*B. jun.* My tender obligations to my father have laid so inviolable a restraint upon my conduct, that till I have his consent to speak, I am determin'd on that subject to be dumb for

ever. An honourable retreat shall always be at least within my power, however Fortune may dispose of me; the lady may repine perhaps, but never shall reproach me.

*Hum.* Well, sir, to your praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable lover in Great Britain.

*Enter Tom.*

*Tom.* Sir, Mr. Myrtle's at the next door, and if you are at leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

*B. jun.* Whene'er he pleases—Hold, Tom; did you receive no answer to my letter?

*Tom.* Sir, I was desired to call again; for I was told her mother would not let her be out of her sight; but about an hour hence Mrs. Phillis said I should have one.

*B. jun.* Very well.

*Hum.* Sir, I will take another opportunity; in the mean time I only think it proper to tell you, that, from a secret I know, you may appear to your father as forward as you please to marry Lucinda, without the least hazard of its coming to a conclusion.—Sir, your most obedient servant.

*B. jun.* Honest Humphrey! continue but my friend in this exigence, and you shall always find me yours. (*Exit Hum.*) I long to hear how my letter has succeeded with Lucinda. Poor Myrtle! what terrors must he be in all this while!—Since he knows she is offered to me and refused to him, there is no conversing or taking any measures with him for his own service. But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in adversity.

All his inquietudes by my own I prove,  
For none exceeds perplexity in love.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT H.—SCENE I *continues.* *Enter Bevil, jun. and Tom.*

*Tom.* SIR, Mr. Myrtle.

*B. jun.* Very well.—Do you step again, and wait for an answer to my letter.

[*Exit Tom.*]

*Enter Myrtle.*

Well, Charles, why so much care in thy countenance? is there any thing in this world deserves it? you who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!

*Myr.* I think we have of late chang'd complexions.—You who us'd to be much the graver man, are now all air in your behaviour. But the cause of my concern may, for aught I know, be the same object that gives you all this satisfaction. In a word, I am told that you are this very day (and your dress confirms me in it) to be married to Lucinda.

*B. jun.* You are not misinformed—Nay, put not on the terrors of a rival till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of fathers if I don't seem ready to marry Lucinda; and you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret resolution never to marry her for your own service as you please:

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## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

but I am now driven to the extremity of immediately refusing or complying, unless you help me to escape the match.

*Myr.* Escape, sir! neither her merit nor her fortune are below your acceptance. Escaping do you call it?

*B. jun.* Dear sir! do you wish I should desire the match?

*Myr.* No—but such is my humorous and sickly state of mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but Lucinda, that tho' I must owe my happiness to your aversion to this marriage, I can't bear to hear her spoken of with levity or unconcern.

*B. jun.* Pardon me, sir, I shall transgress that way no more. She has understanding, beauty, shape, complexion, wit—

*Myr.* Nay, dear Bevil! don't speak of her as if you lov'd her neither.

*B. jun.* Why then, to give you ease at once, tho' I allow Lucinda to have good sense, wit, beauty, and virtue, I know another in whom these qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

*Myr.* There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natur'd friend. When you acknowledge her merit, and own your prepossession for another, at once you gratify my fondness and cure my jealousy.

*B. jun.* But all this while you take no notice you have no apprehension, of another man that has twice the fortune of either of us.

*Myr.* Cimberton! Hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantic coxcomb—for the sot, with all these crude notions of divers things, under the direction of great vanity and very little judgment, shews his strongest bias is avarice, which is so predominant in him, that he will examine the limbs of his mistress with the caution of a jockey, and pays no more compliment to her personal charms than if she were a mere breeding animal.

*B. jun.* Are you sure that is not affected? I have known some women sooner set on fire by that sort of negligence, than by all the blaze and ceremony of a court.

*Myr.* No, no; hang him! the rogue has no art; it is pure simple insolence and stupidity.

*B. jun.* Yet with all this I don't take him for a fool.

*Myr.* I own the man is not a natural; he has a very quick sense, tho' a very slow understanding—he says indeed many things that want only the circumstances of time and place to be very just and agreeable.

*B. jun.* Well, you may be sure of me if you can disappoint him; but my intelligence says the mother has actually sent for the conveyancer to draw articles for his marriage with Lucinda, tho' those for mine with her are by her father's order ready for signing; but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his daughter in the matter.

*Myr.* Phaw! a poor troublesome woman!—Neither Lucinda nor her father will ever be brought to comply with it—besides, I am sure Cimberton can make no settlement upon her without the concurrence of his great uncle, Sir Geoffry in the West.

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## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

*B. jun.* Well, sir, and I can tell you that's the very point that is now laid before her counsel, to know whether a firm settlement can be made without this uncle's actually joining in it. Now, pray consider, sir, when my affair with Lucinda comes, as it soon must, to an open rapture, how are you sure that Cimberton's fortune may not then tempt her father too to hear his proposals.

*Myr.* There you are right indeed; that must be provided against.—Do you know who are her counsel?

*B. jun.* Yes, for your service I have found out that too; they are Serjeant Bramble and old Target.—By the way, they are neither of 'em known in the family: now I was thinking why you might not put a couple of false counsels upon her, to delay and confound matters a little—besides, it may probably let you into the bottom of her whole design against you.

*Myr.* As how, pray?

*B. jun.* Why, can't you slip on a black wig and a gown, and be old bramble yourself?

*Myr.* Ha! I don't dislike it—but what shall I do for a brother in the case?

*B. jun.* What think you of my fellow Tom? The rogue's intelligent, and is a good mimic; all his part will be to stutter heartily, for that's old Target's case—The conduct of the scene will chiefly lie upon you.

*Myr.* I like it of all things; if you'll send Tom to my chambers I will give him full instructions. This will certainly give me occasion to raise difficulties, to puzzle or confound her project for a while at least.

*B. jun.* I warrant you success; so far we are right then. And now, Charles, your apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

*Myr.* Dear Bevil! tho' I know you are my friend, yet when I abstract myself from my own interest in the thing, I know no objection she can make to you, or you to her and therefore hope—

*B. jun.* Dear Myrtie! I am as much oblig'd to you for the cause of your suspicion, as I am offended at the effect; but be assured I am taking measures for your certain security, and that all things, with regard to me, will end in your entire satisfaction.

*Myr.* Well, I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can, tho' I cannot but remember that I have more than life at stake on your fidelity.

[Going.]

*B. jun.* Then, depend upon it, you have no chance against you.

*Myr.* Nay, no ceremony; you know I must be going.

*B. jun.* Well, this's another instance of the perplexities which arise too in faithful friendship. But all this while poor Indiana is tortured with the doubt of me; I'll take this opportunity to visit her; for tho' the religious vow I have made to my father restrains me from ever marrying without his approbation, yet



## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

that confines me not from seeing a virtuous woman, that is the pure delight of my eyes and the guiltless joy of my heart. But the best condition of human life is but a gentler misery.

To hope for perfect happiness is vain,  
And love has ever its allays of pain.

[Exit]

## SCENE II.—Indiana's Lodgings.

Enter Isabella and Indiana.

*Isab.* Yes—I say 'tis artifice, dear child! I say to thee again and again, 'tis all skill and management.

*Ind.* Will you persuade me there can be an ill design in supporting me in the condition of a woman of quality! attended, dress'd, and lodg'd, like one in my appearance abroad, and my furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous manner, and he that does it has an artifice, a design in it?

*Isab.* Yes, yes.

*Ind.* And all this without so much as explaining to me that all about me comes from him.

*Isab.* Ay, ay—the more for that—that keeps the title to all you have the more in him.

*Ind.* The more in him!—he scorns the thought—

*Isab.* Then he—he—he—

*Ind.* Well, be not so eager.—If he is an ill man, let's look into his stratagems; here is another of them: (*Shewing a l u r.*) Here's two hundred and fifty pounds in bank notes, with these words, "To pay for the set of dressing plate which will be brought home to-morrow." Why, dear aunt! now here's another piece of skill for you which I own I cannot comprehend—and it is with a bleeding heart I hear you say any thing to the disadvantage of Mr. Bevil. When he is present I look upon him as one to whom I owe my life and the support of it; then again, as the man who loves me with sincerity and honour. When his eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my heart is painfully divided between shame and love. I say thus it is with me while I see him, and in his absence I am entertain'd with nothing but your endeavours to tear this amiable image from my heart, and in its stead to place a base dissembler, an artful invader of my happiness, my innocence, my honour.

*Isab.* Ah, poor soul! has not his plot taken? don't you die for him? has not the way he has taken been the most proper with you? Oh, ho! he has sense, and has judged the thing right.

*Ind.* Go on then, since nothing can answer you; say what you will of him.—Heigh ho!

*Isab.* Heigh ho! indeed. It is better to say so as you are now than as many others are. There are among the destroyers of women the gentle, the generous, the mild, the affable, the humble, who all, soon after their success in their designs, turn to the contrary of those characters. They embrace without love, they make vows without conscience of obligation; they

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# THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

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are partners, nay, seducers, to the crime, wherein they pretend to be less guilty.

*Ind.* That's truly observ'd. (*Afide.*) But what's all this to Bevil?

*Ifab.* This is to Bevil and all mankind. Won't you be on your guard against those who would betray you? won't you doubt those who would condemn you for believing 'em? Such is the world, and such (since the behaviour of one man to myself) have I believed all the rest of the sex. (*Afide.*)

*Ind.* I will not doubt the truth of Bevil, I will not doubt it: he has not spoke it by an organ that is given to lying: his eyes are all that have ever told me that he was mine. I know his virtue, I know his filial piety, and ought to trust his management with a father to whom he has uncommon obligations.—What have I to be concern'd for? my lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my purpose of life is only to please him. If he leaves me, (which Heaven avert) I know he'll do it nobly; and I shall have nothing to do but to 'learn to die, after worse than death has happen'd to me.

*Ifab.* Ay, do persist in your credulity; flatter yourself that a man of his figure and fortune will make himself the jest of the town, and marry a handsome beggar for love.

*Ind.* The town! I must tell you, madam, the fools that laugh at Mr. Bevil will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the result of thinking, and he has sense enough to make even virtue fashionable.

*Ifab.* Come, come; if he were the honest fool you take him for, why has he kept you here these three weeks without sending you to Bristol in search of your father, your family, and your relations?

*Ind.* I am convinc'd he still designs it; besides, has he not writ to Bristol? and has not he advice that my father has not been heard of there almost these twenty years?

*Ifab.* All sham, mere evasion; he is afraid, if he should carry you thither, your honest relations may take you out of his hands, and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

*Ind.* Wicked hopes! did I ever give him any such?

*Ifab.* Has he ever given you any honest ones? Can you say in your conscience he has ever once offered to marry you?

*Ind.* No; but by his behaviour I am convinc'd he will offer it the moment 'tis in his power, or consistent with his honour, to make such a promise good to me.

*Ifab.* His honour!

*Ind.* I will rely upon it; therefore desire you will not make my life uneasy by these ungrateful jealousies of one to whom I am and wish to be oblig'd; for from his integrity alone I have resolv'd to hope for happiness.

*Ifab.* Nay, I have done my duty; if you won't see, at your peril be it.

*Ind.* Let it be.—This is his hour of visiting me. (*Apart.*)

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

All the rest of my life is but waiting till he comes: I live only while I'm with him. [Exit.]

*Tab.* Well, go thy way, thou wifful innocent! I once had almost as much love for a man who poorly left me to marry an estate—and I am now, against my will, what they call an old maid—but I will not let the peevishness of that condition grow upon me—only keep up the suspicion of it to prevent this creature's being any other than a virgin, except upon proper terms. [Exit.]

*Re-enter Indiana, speaking to a Servant.*

*Ind.* Desire Mr. Bevil to walk in.—Design! impossible! a base designing mind could never think of what he hourly puts in practice; and yet, since the late rumour of his marriage he seems more reserv'd than formerly; he sends in too before he sees me, to know if I am at leisure. Such new respect may cover coldness in the heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful; I'll know the worst at once; I'll lay such fair occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an explanation—for these doubts are insupportable. But see he comes and clears them all.

*Enter Bevil, jun.*

*B. jun.* Madam, your most obedient. I am afraid I broke in upon your rest last night—'twas very late before we parted, but 'twas your own fault; I never saw you in such agreeable Humour.

*Ind.* I am extremely glad we are both pleas'd; for I thought I never saw you better company.

*B. jun.* Me, madam! you rally; I said very little.

*Ind.* But I am afraid you heard me say a great deal; and when a woman is in the talking vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have patience to hear her.

*B. jun.* Then it's pity, madam, you should ever be silent, that we might be always agreeable to one another.

*Ind.* If I had your talent or power to make my actions speak for me, I might indeed be silent, and yet pretend to something more than the agreeable.

*B. jun.* If I might be vain of any thing in my power, madam, it is that my understanding, from all your sex, has mark'd you out as the most deserving object of my esteem.

*Ind.* Should I think I deserve this, it were enough to make any vanity forfeit the esteem you offer me.

*B. jun.* How so, madam?

*Ind.* Because esteem is the result of reason, and to deserve it from good sense the height of human glory. Nay, I had rather a man of honour should pay me that, than all the homage of a sincere and humble love.

*B. jun.* You certainly distinguish right, madam; love often kindles from external merit only—

*Ind.* But esteem arises from a higher source, the merit of the soul—

*B. jun.* True—and great souls only can deserve it. [bowing.]



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*Ind.* Now I think they are greater still that can so charitably part with it.

*B. jun.* Now, madam, you make me vain, since the utmost pride and pleasure of my life is that I esteem you—as I ought.

*Ind. (Aside.)* As he ought! Still more perplexing! he neither saves nor kills my hope.

*B. jun.* But, madam, we grow grave, methinks—let's find some other subject.—Pray how did you like the opera last night?

*Ind.* First give me leave to thank you for my tickets.

*B. jun.* Oh? your servant, madam.

*Enter* Servant.

*Ser.* Sir, here's Signor Carbonelli says he waits your commands in the next room.

*B. jun.* Apropos! you were saying yesterday, madam, you had a mind to hear him.—Will you give him leave to entertain you now? (*After a sonata is played, Bevil, jun. waits on the master to the door, &c.*) You smile, madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his visit. Now I own I think it not enough barely to pay those whose talents are superior to our own (I mean such talents as would become our condition if we had them;) methinks we ought to do something more than barely gratify them for what they do at our command, only because their fortune is below us.

*Ind.* You say I smile; I assure you it was a smile of approbation; for indeed I cannot but think it the distinguishing part of a gentleman to make his superiority of fortune as easy to his inferiors as he can.—Now, once more to try him. (*Aside.*)—I was saying just now I believe you would never let me dispute with you and I dare say it will always be so: however, I must have your opinion upon a subject which created a debate between my aunt and me just before you came hither; she would needs have it that no man ever does any extraordinary kindness or service for a woman but for his own sake.

*B. jun.* Well, madam! indeed I can't but be of her mind.

*Ind.* What, tho' he would maintain and support her, without demanding any thing of her on her part!

*B. jun.* Why, madam is making an expence in the service of a valuable woman, (for such I must suppose her) though she should never do him any favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such service such a mighty heroic business.

*Ind.* Certainly! I should think he must be a man of an uncommon mould.

*B. jun.* Dear madam! why so? 'tis but at best a better taste in expence. To bestow upon one whom he may think one of the ornaments of the whole creation, to be conscious that from his superfluity an innocent, a virtuous spirit is supported above the temptations, the sorrows of life; that he sees satisfaction, health, and gladness in her countenance, while he enjoys the happiness of seeing her: (as that I will suppose too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible) I say, if he is allowed to delight in that prospect, alas! what mighty matter is there in all this?



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*Ind.* No mighty matter in so disinterested a friendship!

*B. jun.* Disinterested! I can't think him so. Your hero, madam, is no more than what every gentleman ought to be, and I believe very many are—he is only one who takes more delight in reflections than in sensations; he is more pleased with thinking than eating; that's the utmost you can say of him.—Why, madam, a greater expence than all this, men lay out upon an unnecessary stable of horses.

*Ind.* Can you be sincere in what you say?

*B. jun.* You may depend upon it, if you know any such man, he does not love dogs inordinately.

*Ind.* No, that he does not.

*B. jun.* Nor cards, nor dice—

*Ind.* No.

*B. jun.* Nor bottle companions—

*Ind.* No.

*B. jun.* Nor loose women—

*Ind.* No, I'm sure he does not.

*B. jun.* Take my word then, if your admired hero is not liable to any of these kind of demands, there's no such pre-eminence in this as you may imagine: nay, this way of expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him that has a taste for it, and at the same time his delight is incapable of satiety, disgust, or penitence.

*Ind.* But still, I insist, his having no private interest in the action makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

*B. jun.* Dear madam! I never knew you more mistaken.—Why who can be more an usurer than he who lays out his money in such valuable purchases? If pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a pleasure is it to him, who has a true taste of life, to ease an aching heart; to see the human countenance lighted up into smiles of joy, on the receipt of a bit of ore, which is superfluous, and otherwise useless, in a man's own pocket! What could a man do better with his cash? This is the effect of a humane disposition, where there is only a general tie of nature and common necessity; what then must it be, when we serve an object of merit, of admiration!

*Ind.* Well the more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the generosity.

*B. jun.* Nay, then, madam, 'tis time to fly, after a declaration that my opinion strengthens my adversary's argument. I had best hasten to my appointment with Mr. Myrtle, and be gone while we are friends, and—before things are brought to an extremity.

[Exit carelessly.]

Enter Isabella.

*Isab.* Well, madam, what think you of him now, pray?

*Ind.* I protest I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my heart, he has no other view but the mere pleasure of doing it, and has neither good or bad designs upon me.

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*Isab.* Ah, dear niece! don't be in fear of both: I'll warrant you, you will know time enough that he is not indifferent.

*Ind.* You please me when you tell me so; for if he has any wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with honour.

*Isab.* I wish I were as confident of one as t'other.—I saw the respectful downcast of his eye when you catch'd him gazing at you during the music. Oh the undissembled guilty look!

*Ind.* But did you observe any thing really? I thought he look'd most charmingly graceful. How engaging is modesty in a man when one knows there is a great mind within!

*Isab.* Ah niece! Some men's modesty serves their wickedness, as hypocrisy gains the respect due to piety. But I will own to you, there is one hopeful symptom; if there could be such a thing as a disinterested lover; but till—till—till—

*Ind.* Till what?

*Isab.* Till I know whether Mr. Myrtle and Mr. Bevil are really friends or foes—and that I will be convinc'd of before I sleep, for you shall not be deceiv'd. *[Exit Isabella.]*

*Ind.* I'm sure I never shall, if your fears can guard me. In the mean time I'll wrap myself up in the integrity of my own heart, nor dare to doubt of his.

As conscious honour all his actions steers,

So conscious innocence dispels my fears.

*[Exit.]*

## ACT III. SCENE I.—Sealand's House.

*Enter Tom, meeting Phillis.*

*Tom.* WELL, Phillis!—What! with a face as if you had never seen me before?—What a work have I to do now! She has seen some new visitant at their house whose airs she has catch'd, and is resolv'd to practise them upon me. Numberless are the changes she'll dance thro' before she'll answer this plain question, *videlicet*, Have you deliver'd my master's letter to your lady? Nay, I know her too well to ask an account of it in an ordinary way; I'll be in my airs as well as she. *(Aside.)* Well, madam, as unhappy as you are at present pleas'd to make me, I would not in the general be any other than what I am; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter, than I am at this instant. *[Looking steadfastly at her.]*

*Phil.* Did ever any body doubt, Master Thomas, but that you were extremely satisfied with your sweet self?

*Tom.* I am indeed. The thing I have least reason to be satisfied with is my fortune, and I am glad of my poverty; perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest woman in the world, that wants nothing but riches to be thought so.

*Phil.* How prettily was that said! But I'll have a great deal more before I'll say one word. *[Aside.]*

*Tom.* I should perhaps have been stupidly above her had I not been her equal, and by not being her equal, never had opportunity of being her slave. I am my master's servant for hire,

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

I am my mistress's from choice, would she but approve my passion.

*Phil.* I think it is the first time I ever heard you speak of it with any sense of anguish, if you really do suffer any.

*Tom.* Ah, Phillis! can you doubt after what you have seen?

*Phil.* I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard; but since I am at leisure, you may tell me when you fell in love with me, how you fell in love with me, and what you have suffer'd, or are ready to suffer for me.

*Tom.* Oh the unmerciful jade! when I'm in haste about my master's letter—But I must go thro' it, [*Aside*].—Ah! too well I remember when, and how, and on what occasion, I was first surpris'd. It was on the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and fifteen, I came into Mr. Sealand's service; I was then a hobble de-hoy, and you a pretty little tight girl, a favourite handmaid of the housekeeper.—At that time we neither of us knew what was in us. I remember I was ordered to get out of the window, one pair of stairs to rub the sashes clean—the person employed on the inner side was your charming self, whom I had never seen before.

*Phil.* I think I remember the silly accident. What made ye, you oaf, ready to fall down in the street?

*Tom.* You know not, I warrant you—you could not guess what surpris'd me—you took no delight when you immediately grew wanton in your conquest, and put your lips close and breath'd upon the glass, and when my lips approach'd, a dirty cloth you rubb'd against my face, and hid your beauteous form; when I again drew near, you spit and rubb'd, and smil'd at my undoing.

*Phil.* What silly thoughts you men have!

*Tom.* We were Pyramus and Thisbe—but ten times harder was my fate: Pyramus could peep only thro' a wall; I saw her, saw my Thisbe, in all her beauty, but as much kept from her as if a hundred walls between; for there was more, there was her will against me.—Would she but relent!—Oh Phillis; Phillis! shorten my torment, and declare you pity me.

*Phil.* I believe it's very sufferable; the Pain is not so exquisite but that you may bear it a little longer.

*Tom.* Oh, my charming Phillis! if all depended on my fair one's will, I could with glory suffer—but, dearest creature I consider our miserable state.

*Phil.* How! miserable!

*Tom.* We are miserable to be in love, and under the command of others than those we love—with that generous passion in the heart to be sent to and fro on errands, call'd, check'd, and rated for the meanest trifles—Oh, Phillis! you don't know how many China cups and glasses my passion for you has made me break; you have broken my fortune as well as my heart.

*Phil.* Well, Mr. Thomas, I cannot but own to you that I believe your master writes, and you speak, the best of any men in

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*Tom.*

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*Phil.*

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# THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

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the world. Never was a woman so well pleas'd with a letter as my young lady was with his, and this is an answer to it.

[Gives him a letter.]

Tom. This was well done, my dearest! Consider, we must strike out some pretty livelihood for ourselves by closing their affairs: it will be nothing for them to give us a little being of our own, some small tenement, out of their large possessions: whatever they give us, it will be more than what they keep for themselves: one acre with Phillis would be worth a whole country without her.

Phil. Oh, could I but believe you!

Tom. If not the utterance, believe the touch of my lips.

[Kisses her.]

Phil. There's no contradicting you. How closely you argue, Tom!

Tom. And will closer in due time; but I must hasten with this letter, to hasten towards the possession of you—then, Phillis, consider how I must be reveng'd (look to it!) of all your skittishness, thy looks, and at best but coy compliances.

Phil. Oh, Tom! you grow wanton and sensual; as my lady calls it: I must not endure it. Oh, foh! you are a man, an odious, filthy male creature! you should have, if you had a right sense, or were a man of sense, like Mr. Cimberton, with distance and indifference; and not rush on one as if you were seizing a prey. But hush—the ladies are coming.—Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and be gone.—Lard! we have been fooling and toying, and not consider'd the main business of our masters and mistresses.

Tom. Why, their business is to be fooling and toying as soon as the parchments are ready.

Phil. Well remember'd—Parchments—my lady to my knowledge, is preparing writings between her coxcomb, cousin Cimberton, and my mistress, though my master has an eye to the parchments already prepar'd between your master, Mr. Bevil, and my mistress: and I believe my mistress herself has sign'd and seal'd in her heart to Mr. Myrtle.—Did I not bid you kiss me but once and be gone? but I know you won't be satisfy'd.

Tom. No, you smooth creature! how should I? [Kisses her hand.]

Phil. Well, since you are so humble, or so cool, as to ravish my hand only, I'll take my leave of you like a great lady, and you a man of quality.

[They salute formally.]

Tom. Pox of all this state!—[Offers to kiss her more closely.]

Phil. No, pr'ythee, Tom, mind your business.—Oh, here is my young mistress! (Tom tops her neck behind, and kisses his fingers.) Go ye liquorish fool.

[Exit Tom.]

Enter Lucinda.

Luc. Who was that you were hurrying away?

Phil. One that I had no mind to part with.

Luc. Why did you turn him away then?

Phil. For your ladyship's service, to carry your ladyship's letter to his master. I could hardly get the rogue away.

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

*Luc.* Why, has he so little love for his master?

*Phil.* No, but he has so much love for his mistress.

*Luc.* But I thought I heard him kiss you: why do you suffer that?

*Phil.* Why, madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of love. We servants, we poor people, that have nothing but our persons to bestow or treat for, squeeze with our hands, and seal with our lips, to ratify vows and promises.

*Luc.* But can't you trust one another, without such earnest down?

*Phil.* We don't think it safe, any more than you gentry, to come together without deeds executed.

*Luc.* Thou art a pert, merry hussy.

*Phil.* I wish, madam, your lover and you were as happy as Tom and your servant are.

*Luc.* You grow impertinent.

*Phil.* I have done, madam; and I won't ask you what you intend to do with Mr. Myrtle, what your father will do with Mr. Bevil, nor what you all, especially my lady, mean by admitting Mr. Cimberton as particularly as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually, as far as people of quality are.

*Luc.* How's that?

*Phil.* You have different beds in the same house.

*Luc.* Pshaw! I have a very great value for Mr. Bevil, but have absolutely put an end to his pretensions in the letter I gave you for him.

*Phil.* Then, Mr. Myrtle—

*Luc.* He had my parents' leave to apply to me, and by that he has won me and my affections: who is to have this body of mine, without 'em, it seems is nothing to me; my mother says, 'tis indecent for me to let my thoughts stray about the person of my husband; nay, she says a maid rightly virtuous, tho' she may have been where her lover was a thousand times, should not have made observations enough to know him from another man when she sees him in a third place.

*Phil.* That's more than the severity of a nun, for not to see when one may is hardly possible, not to see when one can't is very easy: at this rate, madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who—

*Luc.* Mamma says, the first time you see your husband should be at that instant he is made so. When your father, with the help of the minister, gives you to him, then you are to see him, then you are to observe, and take notice of him, because then you are to obey him.

*Phil.* But does not my lady remember you are to love as well as to obey him?

*Luc.* To love is a passion, 'tis a desire, and we must have no desires. Oh! I cannot endure the reflection! With what insensibility on my part, with what more than patience, have I been

# THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

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expos'd and offer'd to some awkward booby or other in every county of Great Britain!

*Phil.* Indeed, madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this indignation.

*Luc.* Every corner of the land has presented me with a wealthy coxcomb: as fast as one treaty has gone off, another has come on, till my name and person has been the tittle-tattle of the whole town.

*Phil.* But, madam, all these vexations will end very soon in one for all: Mr. Cimberton is your mother's kinsman, and three hundred years an older gentleman than any lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large estate, she is resolv'd on him, and has sent to consult the lawyers accordingly; nay has, whether you know it or no, been in treaty with Sir Geoffry, who, to join in the settlement, has accepted of a sum to do it, and is every moment expected in tow for that purpose.

*Luc.* How do you get all this intelligence?

*Phil.* By an art I have, I thank my stars, beyond all the waiting-maids in Great-Britain; the art of list'ning, madam; for your ladyship's service.

*Luc.* I shall soon know as much as you do. Leave me, leave me, Phillis; begone. Here, here, I'll turn you out. My mother says I must not converse with my servants, though I must converse with no one else. [*Exit Phillis.*] Here he comes, with my mother—it's much, if he looks at me, or if he does, takes no more notice of me than of any other moveable in the room. *Enter Mrs. Sealand and Mr. Cimberton.*

*Mrs. Seal.* How do I admire this noble, this learned taste of yours and the worthy regard you have to our own ancient and honourable house, in consulting a means to keep the blood as pure and as regularly descended as may be?

*Cim.* Why, really, madam, the young women of this age are treated with discourses of such a tendency, and their imaginations so bewildered in flesh and blood, that a man of reason can't talk to be understood; they have no ideas of happiness but what are more gross than the gratification of hunger and thirst.

*Luc.* With how much reflection he is a coxcomb. (*Aside.*)

*Cim.* And in truth, madam, I have considered it as a most brutal custom that persons of the first character in the world should go as ordinarily, and with as little shame, to bed as to dinner with one another. They proceed to the propagation of the species as openly as to the preservation of the individual.

*Luc.* She that willingly goes to bed to thee must have no shame, I'm sure. (*Aside.*)

*Mrs. Seal.* Oh, cousin Cimberton! cousin Cimberton! how abstracted, how refin'd is your sense of things! but indeed it is too true, there is nothing so ordinary as to say in the best govern'd families my master and lady are gone to bed—one does not know but it might have been said of one's self.

*Cim.* Lycurgus, madam, instituted otherwise: among the



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Lacedemonians, the whole female world was pregnant, but none but the mothers themselves knew by whom; their meetings were secret, and the amorous congress always by stealth; and no such professed doings between the sexes as are tolerated among us under the audacious word marriage.

*Mrs. Seal.* Oh! had I liv'd in those days and been a matron of Sparta, one might with less indecency have had ten children according to that modest institution, than one under the confusion of our modern barefac'd manner.

*Luc.* And yet, poor woman! she has gone through the whole ceremony, and here I stand a melancholy proof of it. (*Aside.*)

*Mrs. Seal.* We will talk, then of business. That girl, walking about the room there, is to be your wife: she has, I confess, no ideas, no sentiments, that speak her born of a thinking mother.

*Cim.* I have observ'd her; her lively look, free air, and disengag'd countenance, speak her very—

*Luc.* Very what?

*Cim.* If you please, madam—to set her a little that way.

*Mrs. Seal.* Lucinda, say nothing to him, you are not a match for him; when you are married, you may speak to such a husband, when you're spoken to; but I am disposing you above yourself every way.

*Cim.* Madam, you cannot but observe the inconveniencies I expose myself to, in hopes that your ladyship will be the comfort of my better part. As for the young woman, she is rather an impediment than a help to a man of letters and speculation. Madam, there is no reflection, no philosophy, can at all times subdue the sensitive life, but the animal shall sometimes carry away the man—Ha! ay, the vermilion of her lips!

*Luc.* Pray don't talk to me thus.

*Cim.* The pretty enough—pant of her bosom!

*Luc.* Sir! madam, don't you hear him?

*Cim.* Her forward chest!

*Luc.* Intolerable!

*Cim.* High health!

*Luc.* The grave, easy, impudence of him!

*Cim.* Proud heart!

*Luc.* Stupid coxcomb!

*Cim.* I say, madam, her impatience, while we are looking at her, throws out all attractions—her arms—her neck—what a spring in her step!

*Luc.* Don't you run me over thus, you strange unaccountable.

*Cim.* What an elasticity in her veins and arteries!

*Luc.* I have no veins, no arteries!

*Mrs. Seal.* Oh, child! hear him; he talks finely; he's a scholar; he knows what you have.

*Cim.* The speaking invitation of her shape, the gathering of herself up, and the indignation you see in the pretty little thing! Now I am considering her on this occasion but as one that is to be pregnant—And pregnant undoubtedly she will be yearly: I fear I sha'n't for many years have discretion enough to give her one fallow season.

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*Luc.* Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous sort;—  
There's no enduring it, to be thus survey'd like a steed at sale.

*Cim.* At sale!—she's very illiterate; but she's very well  
limb'd too. Turn her in, I see what she is.

*Mrs. Seal.* Go, you creature! I am asham'd of you.

*[Exit Lucinda in a rage.]*

*Cim.* No harm done.—You know, madam, the better sort of  
people, as I observ'd to you, treat by their lawyers of weddings,  
*[adjusting himself at the glass.]* and the woman in the bargain,  
like the mansion-house in the sale of the estate, is thrown in, and  
what that is, whether good or bad, is not at all consider'd.

*Mrs. Seal.* I grant it, and therefore make no demand for her  
youth and beauty, and every other accomplishment, as the com-  
mon world think 'em, because she is not polite.

*Cim.* Madam, I marry to have an heir to my estate, and not  
to beget a colony or a plantation. This young woman's beauty  
and constitution will demand provision for a tenth child at least.

*Mrs. Seal.* But I have given directions for the marriage set-  
tlements, and Sir Geoffry Cimberton's counsel is to meet ours  
here at this hour concerning his joining in the deed, which,  
when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to  
Lucinda's fortune. Herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

*Cim.* No, no, no; indeed, madam, it is not usual, and I must  
depend upon my own reflection and philosophy not to overstock  
my family.

*Mrs. Seal.* I cannot help her, cousin Cimberton, but she is,  
for ought I see, as well as the daughter of any body else.

*Cim.* That is very true, madam.

*Enter a servant, who whispers Mrs. Seal and.*

*Mrs. Seal.* The lawyers are come, but good cousin, you must  
have patience with 'em. These lawyers, I am told, are of a dif-  
ferent kind; one is what they call a chamber counsel, the other  
a pleader: the conveyancer is slow from an imperfection in his  
speech, and therefore shunn'd the bar, but extremely passionate,  
and impatient of contradiction: the other is as warm as he, but  
has a tongue so voluble, and a head so conceited, he will suffer no  
body to speak but himself.

*Cim.* You mean old Serjeant Target and Counsellor Bramble:  
I have heard of 'em.

*Mrs. Seal.* The same: shew in the gentlemen. *(Exit servant.)*

*Re-enter servant, introducing Myrtle and Tom, disguis'd as  
Bramble and Target.*

*Mrs. Seal.* Gentlemen, this is the party concern'd, Mr. Cim-  
berton, and I hope you have consider'd of the matter.

*Tab.* Yes, madam, we have agreed that it must be by indent—  
dent—dent—dent—

*Bram.* Yes, madam, Mr. Serjeant and myself have agreed, as  
he is pleas'd to inform you, that it must be an indenture tripar-  
tite, and tripartite let it be, for Sir Geoffry must needs be a par-  
ty. Old Cimberton, in the year 1619, says, in that ancient roll

in Mr. Serjeant's hands, as recourse thereto being had will more at large appear—

*Tar.* Yes, and by the deeds in your hands it appears that—

*Bram.* Mr. Serjeant, I beg of you to make no inferences upon what is in our custody, but speak to the titles in our deeds.—I shall not shew that deed till my client is in town.

*Cim.* You know best your own methods.

*Mrs. Seal.* The single question is, Whether the entail is such, that my cousin, Sir Geoffry, is necessary in this affair?

*Bram.* Yes, as to the lordship of Tretreplet, but not as to the messuage of Grimgribber.

*Tar.* I say that Gr—gr—, that Gr—gr—, Grimgribber, Grimgribber is in us; that is to say, the remainder thereof, as well as that of Tr—, Gr—, Trip'et.

*Bram.* You go upon the deed of Sir Ralph, made in the middle of last century, precedent to that in which old Cimberton made over the remainder, and made it pass to the heirs general, by which your client comes in; and I question whether the remainder even of Tretreplet is in him—but we are willing to wave that, and give him a valuable consideration. But we shall not purchase what is in us for ever, as Grimgribber is, at the rate as we guard against the contingent of Mr. Cimberton having no son.—Then we know Sir Geoffry is the first of the collateral male line in this family—yet—

*Tar.* Sir, Gr—gr—ber is—

*Bram.* I apprehend you very well, and your argument might be of force, and we would be inclin'd to hear that in all its parts. But, sir, I see very plainly what you are going into—I tell you it is as probable a contingent that Sir Geoffry may die before Mr. Cimberton as that he may outlive him.

*Tar.* Sir, we are not ripe for that yet, but I must say—

*Bram.* Sir, I allow you the whole extent of that argument, but that will go no farther than as to the claimants under old Cimberton.—I am of opinion that, according to the instructions of Sir Ralph, he could not dock the entail, and then create a new estate for the heirs in general.

*Tar.* Sir, I have no patience to be told, that when Gr-gr-ber—

*Bram.* I will allow it you Mr. Serjeant; but there must be the words heirs for ever to make such an estate as you pretend.

*Cim.* I must be impartial though you are counsel for my side of the question.—Were it not that you are so good as to allow him what he has not said, I should think it very hard you should answer him without hearing him.—But gentlemen, I believe you have both consider'd this matter, and are firm in your different opinions; 'twere better therefore you proceeded according to the particular sense of each of you, and give your thoughts distinctly in writing—And, do you see, sirs, pray let me have a copy of what you say in English.

*Bram.* Why, what is all we have been saying?—In English—Oh! but I forgot myself; you're a wit.—But however, to please you, sir, you shall have it in as plain terms as the law will admit of.



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*Jim.* But I will have it, sir, without delay.

*Bram.* That, sir, the law will not admit of; the courts are sitting at Westminster, and I am this moment oblig'd to be at every one of them, and 'twould be wrong if I should not be in the Hall to attend one of 'em at least; the rest would take it ill else:—therefore I must leave what I have said to Mr. Serjeant's consideration, and I will digest his arguments on my part, and you shall hear from me again, sir. [Exit Bramble.]

*Tar.* Agreed, agreed.

*Jim.* Mr. Bramble is very quick—he parted a little abruptly.

*Tar.* He cou'd not bear my a-gument; I pinched him to the quick about that Gr—gr—ber.

*Mrs. Seal.* I saw that, for he durst not so much as hear you. I shall send to you, Mr. Serjeant, as soon as Sir Geoffry comes to town, and then I hope all may be adjusted.

*Tar.* I shall be at my chambers at my usual hours. [Exit.]

*Jim.* Madam, if you please, I'll now attend you to the tea-table, where I shall hear from your ladyship reason and good sense, after all this law and gibberish.

*Mrs. Seal.* 'Tis a wonderful thing, sir, that men of their profession do not study to talk the substance of what they have to say in the language of the rest of the world; sure they'd find their account in it.

*Jim.* They might perhaps, madam, with people of your good sense, but with the generality 'twould never do: the vulgar would have no respect for truth and knowledge if they were expos'd to naked view.

Truth is too simple of all art bereav'd;

Since the world will—why let it be deceiv'd. [Exeunt.]

### ACT IV. SCENE I—Bevil, Junior's, Lodgings.

*Bevil, Junior, with a letter in his hand, followed by Tom.*

*Tom.* UPON my life, sir, I know nothing of the matter:—I never open'd my lips to Mr. Myrtle about any thing of your honour's letter to Madam Lucinda.

*B. jun.* What's the fool in such a fright for? I don't suppose you did: what I would know is, whether Mr. Myrtle shew'd any suspicion, or ask'd you any questions, to lead you to say casually that you had carried any such letter for me this morning?

*Tom.* Why, sir, if he did ask me any questions, how could I ne'p it?

*B. jun.* I don't say you cou'd, oaf! I am not questioning you but him. What did he say to you?

*Tom.* Why, sir, when I came to his chambers to be dress'd for the lawyer's part your honour was pleas'd to put me upon, he ask'd me if I had been to Mr. Sealand's this morning?—So I told him, sir, I often went thither—because, sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought there was something more in my going now than at another time.

*B. jun.* Very well. The fellow's caution I find has given him this jealousy. (*Aside*) Did he ask you no other questions?

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

*Tom.* Yes, sir—now I remember, as we came away in the hackney-coach from Mr. Sealand's, Tom, says he, as I came in to your master this morning, he bad you go for an answer to a letter he had sent; pray did you bring him any? says he—  
*Ah!* says I, sir, your honour is pleased to joke with me; you have a mind to know whether I can keep a secret or no.

*B. jun.* And so by shewing him you could, you told him you had one.

*Tom.* Sir—

[*Confusedly.*]

*B. jun.* What mean actions does jealousy make a man stoop to! how poorly has he us'd art with a servant to make him betray his master!—Well, and when did he give you this letter for me?

*Tom.* Sir, he writ it before he pull'd off his lawyer's gown at his own chambers.

*B. jun.* Very well—and what did he say when you brought him my answer to it?

*Tom.* He look'd a little out of humour, sir, and said it was very well.

*B. jun.* I knew he would be grave upon't.—Wait without.

*Tom.* Hum! 'gad I don't like this: I am afraid we are in the wrong box here—

[*Exit Tom.*]

*B. jun.* I put on a serenity while my fellow was present, but I have never been more thoroughly disturb'd. This hot man, to write me a challenge on supposed artificial dealing, when I profess'd myself his friend!—I can live contented without glory, but I cannot suffer shame. What's to be done? But first, let me consider Lucinda's letter again.

[*Reads.*]

"Sir, I hope it is consistent with the laws a woman ought to impose upon herself, to acknowledge that your manner of declining a treaty of marriage in our family, and desiring the refusal may come from me, has something more engaging in it than the courtship of him who I fear will fall to my lot, except your friend exerts himself for our common safety and happiness. I have reasons for desiring Mr. Mytles may not know of this letter till hereafter, and am your most obliged humble servant,

*Lucinda Sealand."*

Well, but the postscript.

[*Reads.*]

"I won't, upon second thoughts, hide any thing from you: but my reason for concealing this is, that Mr. Mytles has a jealousy in his temper which gives me some terrors; but my esteem for him inclines me to hope that only an ill effect which sometimes accompanies a tender love, and what may be cured by a careful and unblameable conduct."

Thus has this lady made me her friend and confidant, and put herself in a kind under my protection. I cannot tell him immediately the purport of this letter, except I could cure him of the violent and untractable passion of jealousy, and so serve him and her, by disobeying her in the article of secrecy, more than I should by complying with her directions. But then this duelling, which custom has impos'd upon every man who would live with reputation and honour in the world, how must I pre-

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# THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

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Save myself from imputations there? he'll forsooth call it or think it fear, if I explain without fighting—But his letter—I'll read it again—

“ Sir, You have us'd me basely, in corresponding and carrying on a treaty where you told me you were indifferent. I have chang'd my sword since I saw you, which advertisement I thought proper to send you against the next meeting between you and the injur'd  
*Charles Myrtle.*”

*Enter Tom.*

*Tom.* Mr. Myrtle, sir: would your honour please to see him.

*B. jun.* Why, you stupid creature, let Mr. Myrtle wait at my lodgings! Shew him up (*Exit Tom.*) Well, I am resolv'd upon my carriage to him—he is in love, and in every circumstance of life a little distrustful, which I must allow for. But here he is.

*Enter Tom, introducing Myrtle.*

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for this honour—But, sir, you with your very discerning face, leave the room. [*Exit Tom.* Well, Mr. Myrtle, your commands with me?

*Myr.* The time, the place, our long acquaintance, and many other circumstances which affect me on this occasion, oblige me, without farther ceremony or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my letter, but also comply with the request in it. I must have farther notice taken of my message than these half lines—I have yours—I shall be at home—

*B. jun.* Sir, I own I have received a letter from you in a very unusual stile, but as I design every thing in this matter shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleas'd to confirm face to face; and I have already forgot the contents of your epistle.

*Myr.* This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness, and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage and not mine, to your own safety, not consideration of your friend.

*B. jun.* My own safety, Mr. Myrtle!

*Myr.* Your own safety, Mr. Bevil.

*B. jun.* Look you, Mr. Myrtle, there's no disguising that I understand what you would be at: but, sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant custom has introduced to the breach of all laws both divine and human.

*Myr.* Mr. Bevil, Mr. Bevil! it would be a good first principle, in those who have so tender a conscience that way, to have as much abhorrence of doing injuries as—

*B. jun.* As what?

*Myr.* As fear of answering for 'em.

*B. jun.* As fear of answering for 'em! but that apprehension is just or blameable according to the object of that fear. I have oft'n told you, in confidence of heart, I abhorred the daring to offend the Author of Life; and rushing into his presence. I say,



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by the very same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his tribunal.

*Myr.* Mr. Bevil, I must tell you this coolness, this gravity, this shew of conscience, shall never cheat me of my mistress. You have indeed the best excuse for life, the hopes of possessing Lucinda; but consider, sir, I have as much reason to be weary of it if I am to lose her, and my first attempt to recover her shall be to let her see the dauntless man who is to be her guardian and protector.

*B. jun.* Sir shew me but the least glimpse of argument, that I am authoris'd, by my own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult of this nature, and I will shew thee, to chastise thee hardly deserves the name of courage. Slight inconsiderate man! There is, Mr. Myrtle, no such terror in quick anger, and you shall you know not why be cool, as you have you know not why been warm.

*Myr.* Is the woman one loves so little an occasion of anger? You, perhaps, who know not what it is to love, who have your ready, your commodious, your foreign trinket, for your loose hours, and from your fortune, your specious, outward carriage, and other lucky circumstances, as easy a way to the possession of a woman of honour, you know nothing what it is to be alarmed, to be distracted, with anxiety and terror of losing more than life. Your marriage, happy man! goes on like common business, and in the interim you have your rambling captive, your Indian princess, for your soft moments of dalliance, your convenient, your ready, Indiana.

*B. jun.* You have touch'd me beyond the patience of a man, and I'm excuseable in the guard of innocence, or from the infirmity of human nature, which can bear no more, to accept your invitation and observe your letter. Sir, I'll attend you.

*Enter Tom.*

*Tom.* Did you call, sir? I thought you did; I heard you speak loud.

*B. jun.* Yes; go call a coach.

*Tom.* Sir—Maiter—Mr. Myrtle—Friends—Gentlemen—what d'ye mean? I'm but a servant, or—

*B. jun.* Call a coach.

*(Exit Tom.)*

*(A long pause, walking sullenly by each other.)*

*(Aside.)* Shall I, tho' provoked to the uttermost, recover myself at the entrance of a third person, and that my servant too, and not have respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from infancy, the obligation to the best of fathers, to an unhappy virgin too, whose life depends on mine? *[Shutting the door.]*

*(To Myrtle.)* I have, thank Heaven, had time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash man as you think of me, keep longer unexplained the false appearances under which your infirmity of temper makes you suffer, when perhaps too much regard to a false point of honour makes me prolong that suffering.

*Myr.* I am sure Mr. Bevil cannot doubt but I had rather have satisfaction from his innocence than his sword.

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*B. jun.* Why then would you ask it first that way?

*Myr.* Consider you kept your temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the disadvantage of her you loved.

*B. jun.* True. But let me tell you I have saved you from the most exquisite distress; even tho' you had succeeded in the dispute. I know you so well, that I am sure to have found this letter about a man you had killed, would have been worse than death to yourself. — Read it — When he is thoroughly mortify'd, and shame has got the better of jealousy, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining Lucinda. (*Aside.*)

*Myr.* With what a superiority has he turn'd the injury upon me as the aggressor! I begin to fear I have been too far transported — "A treaty in our family" is that not saying too much? I shall relapse — But I find (on the postscript) "something like jealousy" — With what face can I see my benefactor, my advocate, whom I have treated like a betrayer! — Oh, Bevil! with what words shall I —

*B. jun.* There needs none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

*Myr.* But can you —

*B. jun.* You have o'erpaid the inquietude you gave me in the change I see in you towards me. Alas! what machines are well thy face is a ter'd to that of another man, to that of my companion, my friend.

*Myr.* That I could be such a precipitate wretch!

*B. jun.* Pray no more.

*Myr.* Let me reflect how many friends have died by the hands of friends for want of temper; and you must give me leave to say again and again how much I am beholden to that superior spirit you have subdued me with. What had become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of reason?

*B. jun.* I congratulate to us both the escape from ourselves, and hope the memory of it will make us dearer friends than ever.

*Myr.* Dear Bevil! your friendly conduct has convinced me that there is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue and justice; and yet how many have been sacrificed to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that they often use their swords against each other with dissembled anger and real fear.

Betray'd by honour, and compell'd by shame,  
They hazard being to preserve a name,  
Nor dare inquire into the dread mistake,  
Till plung'd in sad eternity they wake.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. — *St. James's Park.*

*Enter Sir John Bevil and Mr. Sealand.*

*Sir J. B.* Give me leave however, Mr. Sealand, as we are upon a treaty for uniting our families, to mention only the business of an ancient house. Genealogy and descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort —

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

*Mr. Seal.* Geneology and descent!—Sir John value yourself as you please upon your ancient house, I am to talk freely upon every thing you are pleased to put into your bill of rates on this occasion. Yet, sir, I have made no objections to your son's family—it is his morals that I doubt.

*Sir J. B.* Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a citizen's credit, may be no stain to a gentleman's honour.

*Mr. Seal.* Sir John, the honour of a gentleman is as liable to be tainted by as small a matter as the credit of a trader: we are talking of a marriage, and in such a case, the father of a young woman will not think it an addition to the honour or credit of her lover—that he is a keeper—

*Sir J. B.* Mr. Sealand, don't take upon you to spoil my son's marriage with any woman else.

*Mr. Seal.* Sir John, let him apply to any woman else, and have as many mistresses as he pleases.

*Sir J. B.* My son, sir, is a discreet and sober gentleman.

*Mr. Seal.* Sir, I never saw a man that wench'd soberly and discreetly that ever left it off—the decency observed in the practice hides, from the sinner even, the iniquity of it.

*Sir J. B.* But my son, sir, is in the eye of the world a gentleman of merit.

*Mr. Seal.* I own to you I think him so—But Sir John, I am a man exercised and experienced in chances and disasters; I lost in my earlier years a very fine wife, and with her a poor little infant; this makes me perhaps overcautious to preserve the second bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful as I can of this child. You'll pardon me; my poor girl, sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted son to you.

*Sir J. B.* Why, that's one very good reason, Mr. Sealand, why I wish my son had her.

*Mr. Seal.* There is nothing but this strange lady here, this incognita, that can be objected to him. Here and there a man falls in love with an artful creature, and gives up all the motives of life to that one passion.

*Sir J. B.* A man of my son's understanding cannot be supposed to be one of them.

*Mr. Seal.* Very wise men have been so enslaved; and when a man marries with one of them upon his hands, whether moved from the demand of the world, or slighter reasons, such a husband toils with his wife for a month perhaps—then good b'w'ye, madam—the show's over. Ah! John Dryden points out such a man to a hair, where he says,

And while abroad so prodigal the dolt is,

Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is,

Now, in plain terms, sir. I shall not care to have my poor girl turned a grazing, and that must be the case when—

*Sir J. B.* But pray consider, sir, my son—

*Mr. Seal.* Look you, sir, I'll make the matter short. This unknown lady, as I told you, is all the objection I have to him: but one way or other he is or has been certainly engaged to her—I am therefore resolved this very afternoon to visit her:

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now from her behaviour or appearance I shall soon be let into what I may fear or hope for.

*Sir J. B.* Sir, I am very confident there can be nothing inquired into relating to my son that will not, upon being understood, turn to his advantage.

*Mr. Seal.* I hope that as sincerely as you believe it—Sir John Bevil, when I am satisfied in this great point, if your son's conduct answers the character you give him, I shall with your alliance more than that of any gentleman in Great Britain, and so your servant. *(Exit.)*

*Sir J. B.* He is gone in a way but barely civil; but his great wealth, and the merit of his only child, the heiress of it, are not to be lost for a little peevishness— *(Exit.)*

SCENE III. — Bevil, Junior's, Lodgings.

*Enter Tom and Phillis.*

*Tom.* Well, madam, if you must speak with Mr. Myrtle, you shall; he is now with my master in the library.

*Phil.* But you must leave me alone with him, for he can't make me a present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him before you; it would not be decent.

*Tom.* It will be very decent indeed for me to retire, and leave my mistress with another man!

*Phil.* He is a gentleman, and will treat one properly.

*Tom.* I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you. I'll call him to you. *(Exit.)*

*Phil.* What a deal of pother and sputter here is between my mistress and Mr. Myrtle. I could any hour of the day get her to her lover, and would do it—but she, forsooth, will allow no plot to get him, but if he can come to her, I know she would be glad of it; I must therefore do her an acceptable violence, and surprise her into his arms. I am sure I go by the best rule imaginable: if she were my maid, I should think her the best servant in the world for doing so by me.

*Enter Myrtle and Tom.*

Oh, sir! you and Mr. Bevil are fine gentlemen, to let a lady remain under such difficulties as my poor mistress, and not attempt to set her at liberty, or release her from the danger of being instantly married to Cimberton.

*Myr.* Tom has been telling—but what is to be done?

*Phil.* What is to be done! when a man can't come at his mistress—why, can't you fire our house, or the next house to us, to make us run out, and you take us?

*Myr.* How, Mrs. Phillis—

*Phil.* Ay—let me see that rogue deny to fire a house, make a riot, or any other little thing, when there were no other way to come at me.

*Tom.* I am obliged to you, madam.

*Phil.* Why, don't we hear every day of people's hanging themselves for love, and won't they venture the hazard of being hanged for love? Oh! were I a man—

*Myr.* What manly thing would you have me undertake, according to your ladyship's notion of a man?

## THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

*Phil.* Only be at once what one time or other you may be and wish to be, and must be.

*Myr.* Dear girl! talk plainly to me, and consider I, in my condition, can't be in a very good humour. You say to be at once what I must be.

*Phil.* Ay, ay—I mean no more than to be an old man. In a word, old Sir Geoffry Cimberton is every hour expected in town, to join in the deeds and settlements for marrying Mr. Cimberton—He is half blind, half lame, half deaf, half dumb; though, as to his passions and desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the heat of youth.

*Tom.* Come, to the business, and don't keep the gentleman in suspense for the pleasure of being courted, as you serve me.

*Phil.* I saw you at the masquerade act such a one to perfection: go and put on that very habit, and come to our house as Sir Geoffry: there is not one there but myself knows his person? I was born in the parish where he is lord of the manor; I have seen him often and often at church in the country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain security against Mr. Myrtle, and you bring Mr. Myrtle. Leave the rest to me; I leave this with you, and expect—They don't, I told you, know you; they think you out of town, which you had as good be for ever, if you loose this opportunity.—I must be gone I know I am wanted at home.

*Myr.* My dear Phillis! [*Kisses her, and gives her money.*]

*Phil.* Oh fy! my kisses are not my own; you have committed violence; but I'll carry 'em to the right owner. (*Tom kisses her.*) Come, see me down stairs, (*To Tom.*) and leave the lover to think of his last game for the prize. [*Exeunt Tom and Phillis.*]

*Myr.* I think I will instantly attempt this wild expedient—But I am so mortify'd at this conduct of mine towards poor Bevil! he must think meanly of me—I know not how to resume myself, and be in spirit enough for such an adventure as this—yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near Lucinda under her present perplexities; and for—

The next delight to transpo t with the fair,

Is to relieve her in her hours of care.

(*Exit*

ACT V. SCENE I.—Sealand's House.

*Enter Phillis, with lights before Myrtle, disguised like old Sir Geoffry, supported by Mrs. Sealand, Lucinda, and Cimberton.*

*Mrs. Seal.* NOW I have seen you thus far, Sir Geoffry, will you excuse me a moment, while I give my necessary orders for your accommodation? (*Exit Mrs. Sealand.*)

*Myr.* I have not seen you, cousin Cimberton, since you were ten years old; and as it is incumbent on you to keep up your name and family, I shall, upon very reasonable terms, join with you in a settlement to that purpose, tho' I must tell you, cousin, this is the first merchant that has married into our house.

*Luc.* Deuce on 'em! am I a merchant because my father is?

*Myr.* But is he directly a trader at this time? (*Aside.*)

*Cim.* There's no hiding the disgrace, sir; he trades to all parts of the world.

THE CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

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*Myr.* We never had one of our family before who descended from persons that did any thing.

*Gen.* Sir, since it is a girl that they have, I am, for the honour of my family, willing to take it in again; and to sink it in our name and no harm done.

*Myr.* 'Tis prudently and generously resolved—Is this the young thing?

*Cim.* Yes, sir.

*Phil.* Good madam! don't be out of humour, but let them run to the utmost of their extravagance—Hear them out.

*Myr.* Can't I see her nearer? my eyes are but weak.

*Phil.* Beside, I am sure the uncle has something worth your notice. I'll take care to get off the young one, and leave you to observe what may be wrought out of the old one for your good.

*(Exit.)*

*Cim.* Madam, this old gentleman, your great uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see you nearer—Approach, sir.

*Myr.* By your leave, young lady—*(Puts on spectacles.)*—Cousin Cimberton, she has exactly that sort of neck and bosom, for which my sister Gertrude was so much admir'd in the year sixty one, before the French dresses first discovered any thing in women below the chin.

*Luc.* I don't believe my passionate lover there knows whether I have one or not. Ha! ha!

*Cim.* Madam, I would not willingly offend, but I have a better glass—

*[Pulls out a large one.]*

*Enter Phillis to Cimberton.*

*Phil.* Sir, my lady desires to shew the apartment to you that she intends for Sir Geoffry.

*Cim.* Well, sir, by that time you have sufficiently gazed and sunned yourself in the beauties of my spouse there, I will wait on you again.

*(Exit Cim. and Phil.)*

*Myr.* Were it not, madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of importance, tho' we are alone, which I would say more safe from being heard.

*Luc.* There is something in this old fellow, methinks, that raises my curiosity.

*Myr.* To be free, madam, I as heartily condemn this kinsman of mine as you do, and am sorry to see so much beauty and merit devoted by your parents to so insensible a possessor.

*Luc.* Surprising!—I hope then, sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous to pity, whatever may be the interest of your family.

*Myr.* This hand of mine shall never be employ'd to sign any thing against your good and happiness.

*Luc.* I am sorry, sir, it is not in my power to make you proper acknowledgments, but there is a gentleman in the world whose gratitude will, I'm sure, be worthy of the favour.

*Myr.* All the thanks I desire, madam, are in your power to give.

*Luc.* Name them, and command them.



*Myr.* Only, madam, that the first time you are alone with your lover you will with open arms receive him.

*Luc.* As willingly as heart could wish it.

*Myr.* Thus then he claims your promise. Oh, Lucinda!

*Luc.* Oh, a cheat, a cheat, a cheat!

*Myr.* Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your lover; Myrt'e himself, madam.

*Luc.* Oh, bless me! what rashness and folly to surprise me so!—But hush—my mother—

*Enter Mrs. Sealand, Cimberton, and Phill's.*

*Mrs. Seal.* How now! what's the matter?

*Luc.* Oh, madam! as soon as you left the room my uncle fell into a sudden fit, and—and—to I cry'd out for help to support him, and conduct him to his chamber.

*Mrs. Seal.* That was kindly done. Alas, sir! how do you find yourself?

*Myr.* Never was taken in so odd a way in my life—Pray lead me—Oh, I was talking here—Pray carry me—to my cousin Cimberton's young lady—*(Cim. and Luc. leads him as one in pain.)*

*Cim.* Pox, uncle you will pull my ear off!

*Luc.* Pray, uncle, you will squeeze me to death!

*Mrs. Seal.* No matter, no matter—he knows not what he does. Come, sir, shall I help you out?

*Myr.* By no means; I'll trouble nobody but my young cousin here.

*(Cim. and Luc. lead him off.)*

#### SCENE II.—*Choring-Grass.*

*Enter Mr. Sealand and Humphrey.*

*Mr. Seal.* I am very glad, Mr. Humphrey, that you agree with me, that it is for our common good I should look a rough y into this matter.

*Hum.* I am indeed of that opinion; for there is no artifice, nothing concealed in our family which ought in justice to be known. I need not desire you, sir, to treat the lady with care and respect.

*Mr. Seal.* Mr. Humphrey—I shall not be rude, tho' I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the matter at once, to see how she will bear upon a surprise.

*Hum.* That's the door; sir, I wish you success. *(While Humphrey speaks Sealand consults his table book.)* *(Exit.)*

*Mr. Seal.* *(Knocks.)* I'll carry this matter with an air of authority, to inquire, tho' I make an errand to begin discourse. *(Knocks again, enter a footboy.)* So, young man, is your lady within?

*Boy.* Alack, sir! I am but a country boy—I don't know whether she is or no; but an you'll stay a bit I'll go and ask the gent'ewoman that's with her.

*Mr. Seal.* Why, firrah, tho' you are a country boy you can see can't you? you know whether she is at home when you see her, don't you?

*Boy.* Nay, nay, I'm not such a country lad neither, master, to think she is at home because I see her; I have been in town but a month, and I lost one place already for believing my own eyes.

*Mr. Seal.* Why, firrah, have you learnt to lie already?

*Boy.* Ah, master! things that are lies in the country are not

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lies at London—I begin to know my business a little better than so—but an you please to walk in, I'll call a gentleman to you that can tell you for certain—she can make bold to ask my lady herself.

*Mr. Seal.* Oh, then she is within I find, tho' you dare not say so.

*Boy.* Nay, nay, that's neither here nor there; what's matter whether she is within or no if she has not a mind to see any body?

*Mr. Seal.* I can't tell, firrah, whether you are arch or simple; but however, get me a direct answer, and here's a shilling for you.

*Boy.* Will you please to walk in, I'll see what I can do for you.

*Mr. Seal.* I see you will be fit for business in time, child; but I expect to meet nothing but extraordinaries in such a house.

*Boy.* Such a house, fir; you ha'n't seen it yet. Pray walk in.

*Mr. Seal.* Sir, I'll wait upon you.

SCENE III. Indiana's House. *Enter Isabella and Boy.*

*Isab.* So, Daniel, what news with you.

*Boy.* Madam, there's a gentleman below would speak with my lady.

*Isab.* Sirrah, don't you know Mr. Bevil yet?

*Boy.* Madam, 'tis not the gentleman who comes every day and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or no.

*Isab.* Ha! that's a particular I did not know before. Well, be it who it will, let him come up to me.

*Exit Boy, and re-enters with Mr. Seal.* *Isabella looks amaz'd.*

*Mr. Seal.* Madam, I can't blame your being a little surpris'd to see a perfect stranger make a visit, and—

*Isab.* I am indeed surpris'd—I see he does not know me. *(Aside.)*

*Mr. Seal.* You are very prettily lodg'd here, madam; in troth you seem to have every thing in plenty—a thousand a-year I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of rooms, and the dainty one within them. *(Aside, and looking about.)*

*Isab. (Apart.)* Twenty years, it seems, have less effect in the alteration of a man of thirty than of a girl of fourteen—he's almost still the same:—How shall I contain my surprise and satisfaction!—He must not know me yet.

*Mr. Seal.* Madam, I hope I don't give you any disturbance; but there is a young lady here with whom I have a particular business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that favour.

*Isab.* Why, fir, have you had any notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

*Mr. Seal.* That, madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

*Isab.* Well, fir, you shall see her.—You shall see her presently, fir; for now I am as a mother, and will trust her with you. *(Exit.)*

*Mr. Seal.* As a mother! right; that's the old phrase for one of those commodore ladies who lend out beauty for hire to young

gentlemen that have pressing occasions. But here comes the precious lady herself: in troth a very lightly woman!

*Enter Indiana.*

*Ind.* I am told, sir, you have some affair that requires your speaking with me.

*Mr. Seal.* Yes, madam. There came to my hands a bill drawn by Mr. Bevil, which is payable to-morrow, and he, in the intercourse of business, sent it to me, who have cash of his, and desired me to send a servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the money myself.

*Ind.* Sir, was that necessary?

*Mr. Seal.* No, madam; but to be free with you, the fame of your beauty, and the regard which Mr. Bevil is a little too well known to have for you, excited my curiosity.

*Ind.* Too well known to have for me! Your sober appearance, sir, which my friend described, made me expect no rudeness or absurdity at least.—Who's there? Sir, if you pay the money to a servant, 'twill be as well.

*Mr. Seal.* Pray, madam, be not offended; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous design; and if you will have patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you, as you are in friendship with Mr. Bevil, as to my only daughter, whom I was this day disposing of.

*Ind.* You make me hope, sir, I have mistaken you. I am compos'd again; be free, say on—what I am afraid to hear.

*(Aside.)*

*Mr. Seal.* I fear'd indeed an unwarranted passion here, but I did not think it was in abuse of so worthy an object, so accomplished a lady, as your sense and mien bespeak—but the youth of our age care not what merit and virtue they bring to shame, so they gratify—

*Ind.* Sir, you are going into very great errors—but as you are pleas'd to say you see something in me that has chang'd at least the colour of your suspicions, so has your appearance alter'd mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any way concern'd you, to inquire into my affairs and character.

*Mr. Seal.* How sensibly, with what an air she talks!

*Ind.* Good sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your suspicions concerning me alive, that you may in a proper and prepared way—acquaint me why the care of your daughter obliges a person of your seeming worth and fortune to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—*(Weeping.)*—But I beg your pardon—tho' I am an orphan, your child is not, and your concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither—I'll be compos'd—pray go on, sir.

*Mr. Seal.* How could Mr. Bevil be such a monster to injure such a woman?

*Ind.* No, sir, you wrong him; he has not injured me—my support is from his bounty.

*Mr. Seal.* Bounty! when gluttons give high prices for delicacies, they are prodigious bountiful!

*Ind.* Still, still you will persist in that error—but my own

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ears tell me all. You are the gentleman, I suppose, for whose happy daughter he is design'd a husband by his good father, and he has, perhaps, consented to the overture, and he is to be, perhaps, this night a bridegroom.

*Mr. Seal.* I own he was intended such; but, madam, on your account I am determin'd to defer my daughter's marriage till I am satisfied, from your own mouth, of what nature are the obligations you are under to him.

*Ind.* His actions, sir, his eyes, have only made me think he design'd to make me the partner of his heart. The goodness and gentleness of his demeanour made me misinterpret all:—'twas my own hope, my own passion that deluded me; he never made one amorous advance to me: his large heart and bestowing hand have only help'd the miserable; nor know I why, but from his mere delight in virtue, that I have been his care, the object on which to indulge and please himself with pouring favours.

*Mr. Seal.* Madam, I know not why it is, that I as well as you, am methinks afraid of entering into the matter I came about; but 'tis the same thing as if we had talk'd ever so distinctly—he ne'er shall have a daughter of mine.

*Ind.* If you say this from what you think of me, you wrong yourself and him. Let not me, miserable though I may be, do injury to my benefactor: no, sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile you to his virtues. If to bestow without a prospect of return, if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an object of desire, with no other view than to be her guard against those who would not be so disinterested, if these actions, sir, can in a careful parent's eye commend him to a daughter, give your's, sir; give her to my honest, generous, Bevil!—What have I to do but sigh, and weep, to rave, run wild, a lunatic in chains, or, hid in darkness, mutter in distracted starts and broken accents my strange, strange story!

*Mr. Seal.* Take comfort, madam.

*Ind.* All my comfort must be to expostulate in madness, to relieve with frenzy my despair, and, shrieking, to demand of Fate why, why was I born to such variety of sorrows?

*Mr. Seal.* If I have been the least occasion—

*Ind.* No; 'twas Heaven's high will I should be such—to be plunder'd in my cradle, toss'd on the seas, and even there, an infant captive, to lose my mother, hear but of my father—to be adopted, lose my adopter, then plunged again in worse calamities!

*Mr. Seal.* An infant captive!

*Ind.* Yet then to find the most charming of mankind once more to set me free from what I thought the last distress, to load me with his services, his bounties, and his favours, to support my very life in a way that stole, at the same time, my very soul itself from me.

*Mr. Seal.* And has young Bevil been this worthy man?

*Ind.* Yet then again, this very man to take another without

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leaving me the right, the pretence of easing my fond heart with tears?—for oh! I can't reproach him, though the same hand that rais'd me to this height now throws me down the precipice.

*Mr. Seal.* Dear lady; oh yet one moment's patience; my heart grows full with your affliction! but yet there's something in your story that promises relief when you least hope it.

*Ind.* My portion here is bitterness and sorrow.

*Mr. Seal.* Do not think so. Pray answer me; does Bevil know your name and family?

*Ind.* Alas, too well! Oh, could I be any other thing than what I am—I'll tear away all traces of my former self, my little ornaments, the remains of my first state, the hints of what I ought to have been—*[In her disorder she throws away her bracelet, which Sealand takes up and looks earnestly at it.]*

*Mr. Seal.* Ha! what's this? my eyes are not deceiv'd! it is, it is the same; the very bracelet which I bequeath'd my wife at our last mournful parting.

*Ind.* What said you, sir? your wife! Whither does my fancy carry me? what means this new-felt motion at my heart? And yet again my fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, sir, your name is Sealand; but my lost father's name was—

*Mr. Seal.* Danvers, was it not?

*Ind.* What new amazement! that is, indeed, my family.

*Mr. Seal.* Know then, when my misfortunes drove me to the Indies, for reasons too tedious now to mention, I changed my name of Danvers into Sealand.

*Enter Isabella.*

*Isab.* If yet there wants an explanation of your wonder, examine well this face—yours, sir, I well remember—Gaze on, and read in me your sister Isabella.

*Mr. Seal.* My sister!

*Isab.* But here's a claim more tender yet—your Indiana, sir, your long-lost daughter.

*Mr. Seal.* Oh, my child, my child!

*Ind.* All-gracious Heaven! is it possible! do I embrace my father!

*Mr. Seal.* And do I hold thee!—These passions are too strong for utterance.—Rise, rise, my child, and give my tears their way—Oh, my sister!

*[Embracing her.]*

*Isab.* Now, dearest niece! if I have wrong'd thy noble lover with too hard suspicions, my just concern for thee I hope will plead my pardon.

*Mr. Seal.* Oh! make him then the full amends, and be yourself the messenger of joy: fly this instant—tell him all these wondrous turns of Providence in his favour; tell him I have now a daughter to bestow which he no longer will decline; that this day he still shall be a bridegroom, nor shall a fortune, the merit which his father seeks, be wanting. Tell him the reward of all his virtues waits on his acceptance. *[Exit Isabella.]*—My dearest Indiana!

*[Turns and embraces her.]*

*Ind.* Have I then at last a father's sanction on my love! his

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bounteous hand to give, and make my heart a present worthy of Bevil's generosity?

*Mr. Seal.* Oh, my child! how are our sorrows past o'erpaid by such a meeting! Tho' I have lost so many years of lost paternal dalliance with thee, yet in one day to find thee thus, and thus bestow thee, in such perfect happiness, is ample, ample reparation! and yet again the merit of thy lover—

*Ind.* Oh, had I spirits left to tell you of his actions, the pride, the joy of his alliance, sir, would warm your heart, as he has conquered mine.

*Mr. Seal.* How laudable is love when born of virtue! I burn to embrace him.

*Ind.* See, sir, my aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your wishes.

*Enter Isabella with Sir John Bevil, Bevil jun. Mrs. Sealand, Cimberton, Myrtle, and Lucinda.*

*Sir J. B. (interrog.)* Where, where's this scene of wonder! Mr. Sealand, I congratulate on this occasion our mutual happiness.—Your good sister, sir, has with the story of your daughter's fortune fill'd us with surprise and joy. Now all exceptions are removed; my son has now avow'd his love, and turn'd all former jealousies and doubts to approbation, and I am told your goodness has consented to reward him.

*Mr. Seal.* If, sir, a fortune equal to his father's hopes can make this object worthy his acceptance.

*B. jun.* I hear your intention, sir, of fortune with pleasure only, as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of fathers to my love; let him be provident, but let me be happy.—My ever destined, my acknowledged wife! *[Embracing Indiana.]*

*Ind.* Wife!—oh! my ever-loved, my lord, my master!

*Sir J. B.* I congratulate myself as well as you that I have a son who could, under such disadvantages, discover your great merit.

*Mr. Seal.* Oh, Sir John, how vain, how weak is human prudence! what care, what foresight, what imagination could contrive such best events to make our children happy, as Providence in one short hour has laid before us?

*Cim. [To Mrs. Sealand.]* I am afraid, madam, Mr. Sealand is a little too busy for our affair; if you please we'll take another opportunity.

*Mrs. Seal.* Let us have patience, sir.

*Cim.* But we make Sir Geoffrey wait, madam.

*Myr.* Oh, sir, I'm not in haste.

*(During this, Bevil jun. presents Lucinda to Indiana.)*

*Mr. Seal.* But here, here's our general benefactor. Excellent young man! that could be at once a lover to her beauty, and a parent to her virtue!

*B. jun.* If you think that an obligation; sir, give me leave to overpay myself in the only instance that can now add to my felicity, by begging you to bestow this lady on Mr. Myrtle.

*Mr. Seal.* She is his without reserve; I beg he may be sent for.—*Sir Cimberton*, notwithstanding you never had my con-



fant, yet there is, since I saw you, another objection to your marriage with my daughter.

*Cim.* I hope, sir, your lady has conceal'd nothing from me?

*Mr. Seal.* Troth, sir, nothing but what was conceal'd from myself; another daughter, who has an undoubted title to half my estate.

*Cim.* How, Mr Sealand! why then, if half Mrs. Lucinda's fortune is gone, you can't say that any of my estate is settled upon her; I was in treaty for the whole: but if that's not to be come at, to be sure there can be no bargain.—Sir—I have nothing to do but to take my leave of your good lady my cousin, and beg pardon for the trouble I have given this old gentleman.

*Myr.* That you have, Mr. Cimberton, with all my heart.

*(Dis.overs himself.)*

*Omnes.* Mr. Myrtle!

*Myr.* And I beg pardon of the whole company that I assumed the person of Sir Geoffry only to be present at the danger of this lady's being disposed of, and in her utmost exigence to assert my right to her, which if her parents will ratify, as they once favour'd my pretensions, no abatement of fortune shall lessen her value to me.

*Luc.* Generous man!

*Mr. Seal.* If, sir, you can overlook the injury of being in treaty with one who has meanly left her, as you have generously asserted your right in her, she is yours.

*Luc.* Mr. Myrtle, though you have ever had my heart; yet now I find I love you more, because I deserve you less.

*Mrs. Seal.* Well, however, I'm glad the girl's disposed of any way. *(Aside.)*

*B. jun.* Myrtle, no longer rivals now but brothers.

*Mr.* Dear Bevil! you are born to triumph over me; but now our competition ceases: I rejoice in the pre-eminence of your virtue, and your alliance adds charms to Lucinda.

*Sir J. B.* Now ladies and gentlemen, you have set the world a fair example; your happiness is owing to your constancy and merit, and the several difficulties you have struggled with evidently shew

Whate'er the generous mind itself denies,

The secret care of providence supplies. *(Exeunt.)*



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